276 842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

417 259 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care [142]

256 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it,

[455] 383 and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken,the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (mengó), and it is water (bɛ̀tɛ̀ bale mengó ɛ̀á bombilé). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

The fear of bombilé has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

582 583 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price. This is a Nkundó notion, and it is accurate only because the old men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not diminish [238] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives' knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

581 928 595 582 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the bondio, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.

Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry; they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them with a child.

582 578 Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

untangle all the threads. Thus it happens that young people form relationships with the intention of marrying without knowing that they are related; they are warned only by the opposition and ensuing explanations of the elders.

We may conclude that marriage among descendants of a common ancestor is generally prohibited if they live in the same village. It is frequently permitted on the other hand, if they belong to different villages, provided that they are not, at the same time, related to one of the ancestresses.

Clearly, it is difficult to say what precise degree of kinship formed the basis for the prohibition of or permission for a marriage between descendants of a common ancestor, or what are the boundaries of an exogamous grouping.

It is also apparent from the preceding observations -- as from the examination of affinity as an obstacle to marriage -- that the descent from a common mother is a more important factor than descent from the father. This does not give proof of a form of matriarchy, though it could be the remains or the beginning of one, or could provide a partial explanation for one. It stems quite simply from the Nkundó notions concerning procreation, in which they attribute the major role to the mother. There is also the fact that greater shame is attached to being united with a person descended from the same woman, and finally the fact that they feel a stronger affection for the mother than for the father (a sentiment [250] which is accentuated by polygamy). The three causes are closely related.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a group among the Nkundó we are discussing which is less strict than the others in this matter. The relatives among whom marriage is prohibited is definitely more limited; that is, their exogamous groupings are more limited. The people in question are the Bongale (see Introduction), and the same phenomenon may be observed among the Elinga. (1)

1. The Batswa are still more liberal, and in this respect their practices differ very little from ancient European laws and customs.

The shame attached to the discovery of this sort of misconduct in the better circles in Europe is unknown among the Nkundó. This is natural since isolated instances are readily excused. As to the habitual offenders, they are sensitive [326] to the above-mentioned epithets but will not correct their ways on this account any more than people in other parts of the world.

An adulterous husband is criticized as much as an adulterous wife in spite of the difference in the means of repression which Nkundó law provides for their respective misconduct.

Public opinion therefore corroborates the conclusion toward which our examination of sanctions has pointed, namely that adultery is condemned by the Nkundó. Opinion is not based on the existence of the sanction but seems to spring from their innate mentality, which makes them perceive adultery as a disorder.

6. Aggravating circumstances

If a case of adultery is followed by conception, it becomes especially serious, and for the husband as much as for the natural father. Indeed the latter must assume all the consequences. When circumstances permit the husband makes his wife denounce her accomplice, and she does not refuse to do so. The husband then calls a meeting and demands a pledge (nkengé) from the culprit, who in that way acknowledges that he is at fault and shows his willingness to assume all responsibility. If there is a miscarriage or the child dies during delivery, the natural father must pay the legal father an indemnity of "a slave" or more (sometimes 50 rings); a smaller indemnity is required for a child who is only deformed or sickly. If the mother dies the indemnity consists of a slave and 50 rings, and it may go as high as 100 rings.

In the interim the husband no longer goes near his wife. He leaves her to her lover, who must "preserve the fiancée" and observe all the rites and practices associated with pregnancy and childbirth, since, physically, he is the father. (1) [327]

1. For fuller details see Chapter X, Article II, 3. For analogous practices

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837
•[842]

in the case of an unmarried mother, see Chapter I, Part 1, Article III, 3.

[849] Adultery also becomes especially serious during the period preceding childbirth when there is a special prohibition against it, as endangering the lives of both mother and child, as we will explain in Chapter X, Article III.

7. Remarks and general conclusions

837
[721] 1) In former times the offense of adultery, even in its mildest form, that is, an isolated act, was one of the chief causes of "wars" between villages. Sometimes both sides called on their relatives by marriage to assist them, and the result was a general upheaval.

837
Sapr 2) As a rule a husband wants his wife to be faithful. Doubtless there are exceptions. Most if not all of them were formerly found among the old polygamists. At their age they were disgusted with continual palavers, and their experience as men had taught them that they often became angry and uselessly complicated their little lives. They preferred to close their eyes, like good old Bonof w'Ikolongó of Itéko (the Bombwanja clan of the Bodyé). He came to see me in the Christian village of Bombomba through which I was passing at the beginning of March, 1933. I asked him why he was adorned with so many bells, and he answered naively, "I always wear them. That way my wives know of my coming already from a distance. It gives them time to stop slandering me and to send their lovers away." When I expressed my surprise that he did not want to catch them in the act in order to punish them and end their infidelities, he answered me with a smile, "No, Father, jealousy . . . is for the young. As for me, I have seen so much of it that I no longer have any desire to get angry and make palavers for these trivialities."

Since the coming of the Europeans some unscrupulous men -- especially polygamists -- have been engaging in [328] a kind of procuring. They send their wives to commit adultery in order to be able to catch them in the act and thus enrich themselves. Or else they lend their wives for one night or more to laborers or soldiers who are

595 A
§42 5) The desire to increase the number of children is one of the reasons most frequently given; it is the chief, and sometimes the only, one cited by ethnographers. There is no question that it has a great deal of validity, for the Nkundó like to have many children. It is one of the things on which they pride themselves as well as a powerful means for reinforcing a social position (and we are thus led back to the first reason cited).

The question of knowing whether polygamy actually does favor the birth rate is irrelevant here, even if the results of a comparison were clearly against this system and were it proved that "the more wives a polygamist has, the fewer children he has." For the Nkundó never make this statistical computation. He sees only the principle: several women give more children than one. And for them, that is the gist of the matter. Furthermore, the interest of the people as a whole does not appear on the [151] horizon of the Nkundó's thoughts and feelings: they think only of themselves, and in their egoism, they consider only their own interests.

595 C
§51 6) To all these reasons given by the Nkundó to justify the practice of polygamy, we must add a sixth, which they never mention, sensuality. Without colonization it would have been difficult for us to make this statement. [374] But the new state of affairs shows several flaws in our people's arguments. We have already pointed out some of them. Furthermore, all the reasons mentioned up to now do not suffice to account for the existence of polygamy. They do not explain why in the past the old men wanted to keep all the women to themselves, or why a given individual becomes a polygamist. It is a fact that for more than one man none of these alleged reasons have been involved. It is also known that several natives have acquired fortunes by European work (as clerks, salesmen, traders, etc.) in order to be able to establish a harem, though there could have been no motive of vanity or gain in social influence. On the basis of my knowledge of circumstances, persons, and places, I am convinced that even for some natives living in their villages, the primary purpose was clearly sexual. I am acquainted with more than one such case.

586 672 If the wife is ill she may have become ill at her husband's home or elsewhere and these two possible situations must be considered separately. In the first instance there is no cause for divorce, since responsibility for her illness rests entirely with the husband. On the other hand, if the wife contracted her illness while staying with her family, the family must shoulder the responsibility, and if her illness is incurable, the husband can have recourse to divorce. But this is not so if the wife has gone to her parents' home in response to her husband's express order, or if she ran away from the husband's for reasons which are just and reasonable. Some situations may give rise to violent disputes. Such is the case, for example, of an illness during a visit undertaken at the wife's own initiative but for the good of the husband. Theoretically, he should win the case. Also, a stay of twenty-four hours is not considered sufficient to place the responsibility for the illness on the wife's family. (1)

1. For details see Chapter VI, Article III, 3 and 4. See also Chapter IX, Article X.

586 The difference between the consequences of the husband's illness and his wife's is of a practical nature. A husband who suffers from an incurable illness or one that takes too long to cure is usually (though not always) abandoned by his wife. If no other man pays a bride price for her, the marriage continues. If the woman finds a lover, he pays the bride price, which is turned over to the first husband, completing the divorce. But it is not possible to say that the man's illness per se is a cause of divorce, for the wife is under an obligation to take care of a sick husband. [378] But in practice neither of the two families involved demand the application of this law. All yield to the wishes of the woman, who will refuse to continue a union that has so little attraction for her.

Thus illness is not a legally valid reason for divorce. But in practice it is recognized as a situation that can result in the dissolution of a marriage.

[992] Although the Nkundó ardently desire children, sterility

586* is not invoked as a reason for divorce. Yet there are many sterile
● 842 women. To obtain the fulfillment of his desires, a man will have recourse to polygamy. He will try to obtain the valuables he needs in order to acquire another wife. If he does not have the financial means, he could make life difficult for his wife through petty annoyances and meanness of the kind that are not likely to place him in the wrong. In that way he could drive her into leaving him, and thus recover the cost of the bride price. But such behavior is only hypothetical; it could happen here and there, but I know of no instance. In any case a husband never invokes sterility in order to break up a marriage. Therefore, contrary to what happens elsewhere, the question is not raised in Nkundó law.

586* Included among the factors that make the continuation of marriage impossible is a husband's violations of sexual prohibitions during pregnancy or after childbirth, exposing the wife to mortal danger. For through his misconduct the husband becomes guilty of an implicit repudiation, and the wife's father will make use of his right to protect his child's life. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article II, 3.

The remaining reasons are those given at the beginning, which can be reduced to the impossibility of continuing the marriage due to an incompatibility of temperaments, the cooling of love, serious offenses, especially if repeated, [379] serious and continual failures in the performance of duties, and faults that dishonor the culprit. (1) The habit of stealing, in particular, must be mentioned

1. For example, adultery with a relative by marriage -- see Chapter VI, Article V, 2, and Chapter V, Article IV, no. 2., ex. 17.

in this last category. Women who steal, even small things like manioc, fish, or meat, end in provoking most husbands' antipathy

Article IV. Nursing
Article V. Naming
Article VI. The question of twins
Article VII. Circumcision
Article VIII. Education
Article IX. Rights over the children [464]

Article I. Preliminaries

1. Generalities

The Nkundó like to have children. Not only do they like to have daughters, as some too superficial colonials sometimes maintain, but they like to have boys just as much. It is true that a daughter carries the hope of a bride price and all it represents for polygamists eager for pagan glory and carnal pleasures, yet a real preference for children of the weaker sex is seldom observed. What one does encounter, just as in Europe for that matter, is a desire to have a child of a particular sex when, for example, the other is already abundantly represented in the household. Thus a native who already has several boys but no girl or only one, will make offerings to obtain a sister for the boys. That he should do so is hardly astonishing since among these people a sister is the proper and sometimes the only means by which a man can acquire a wife. On the other hand, a father whose progeny are exclusively, or almost exclusively, members of the female sex ardently desires the birth of a son, an heir to the fruits of his labor and someone who would be able to aid and assist him in his old age by building him a hut, clearing the forest for him, and bringing him game or the products of fishing.

Actually one seldom hears these preferences expressed. The impression one gets is rather that the Nkundó love their children as such and also because, whatever their sex, they greatly contribute to the reinforcement of his social position; the two motives are inseparable in practice.

It is sometimes maintained that the natives do not refuse to have children because their coming does not inconvenience them in any way, nor do they impose crushing financial obligations

● 942 955 upon them; their upbringing costs them nothing, whereas among whites the maintenance, dress, food, instruction, and occupational placement involve considerable expenses. It cannot be [465] denied that while the modern European is exacting from all these viewpoints, enchained and blocked by an ever growing multitude of needs, the material life of the native is simple and his necessities are reduced to an indispensable minimum. Nevertheless, it can hardly be said that it is as easy for him to raise a large family with many children as it is to have the responsibility of a smaller number. Without speaking of clothing -- especially at the present time -- there is the food for growing children, which forces him to clear a greater expanse of forest and to work harder at the various ways of fishing and hunting; and when the time comes for the sons to find wives, he is the one who must arrange to procure the valuables needed for a bride price.

For their part, Nkundó women like to transmit life as much as the men, if not more so. Pregnancy may make them disagreeable and grumpy and sometimes cause them pain, but they put up with it and, as a very general rule, do not think of depriving themselves on that account of the happiness of giving birth to a cute little creature, of nursing it, of carrying it in their arms or on their shoulders. The difficulties and pains of maternity do not repel them. Although later, during the payment of her daughter's bride price, a Nkundó woman's greed will lead her to loudly claim the payment due her and even sometimes destroy her child's love because of delaying this financial operation, the delay does not come to their minds until the time comes.

In short, the Nkundó woman feels a perfectly natural, maternal love for her child.

942 955 152 There are of course exceptions to this general rule. And the contrary would be astonishing for a pagan population who give free rein to all their passions or, at least, restrain them only very [466] slightly, and whose love is far from the perfection one may find among a people ennobled by fifteen centuries of Christianity. Moreover -- as all the preceding pages testify -- our Nkundó are not fashioned from a uniform mold notwithstanding the impression given by certain colonial and ethnological works. All the individual

● 842 differences can be found here, although they are less apparent to
855 a European observer since we usually approach the natives as a
152 group and our contact with them is often too impersonal.

2. Abortion

917 A great enemy of maternal love is the practice of abortion, which has always been known to the Nkundó. Here we cannot describe all the prescriptions used for that purpose. It will be sufficient to enumerate the reasons for which they have recourse to this practice. They are as follows:

1) A woman's lasciviousness; the procreation and subsequent care of a child to some extent prevent the indulging in carnal pleasures. Formerly this cause of abortion was nonexistent or very [178] rare. Needless to say, it has become more common, especially in the centers where it is constantly on the increase and where, in addition, occasional or regular "housekeepers" learn new means of sterilization and abortion.

2) A woman's antipathy or persistent anger toward her husband may encourage her to prevent conception or destroy its effect.

3) An excessive weakening of the mother's organism caused by a large number of conceptions and childbirths at too short intervals.

4) The encumberance and the difficulty of watching, carrying, and taking care of many small children -- bilóta bokókyaano [467] [515] wá bána nsúsú nsúsú. This reason is especially important for well-known dancers.

It goes without saying that several of these motives may be combined in the same person. For instance, I knew of a woman who aborted at the time of her eighth child. Her recurrent pregnancies, together with continuous work, had greatly reduced her strength. A palaver with her husband was the last straw; she decided to get rid of the fruit she carried in her body.

Outside of these exceptions the natives of this country ardently desire their own continuation through a large number of progeny. (1)

[118]

1. The same is not true elsewhere. Examples to that effect are cited from regions that are

§41 they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (ɛ̂mɔ̂nkɛ́l'ɔ́nkɔ́nyɛ́, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for
[§42] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

§43 An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few ɔ́kɔ́mɛ́ payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [488]

Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

§52 §53 The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Now,

finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during menstruation (-kpa or fua ndongf, literally "to be ill from" or "to see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance.

1. Elimá

The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes to God (Nyakombe) and sometimes to spirits (elimá, pl. bilimá). God forms (-fonga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the bilimá provide the men among the progeny. (1)

1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lemaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 303) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Nyakombe or Mbombiámá) directly, but rather a particular elimá.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilimá are subject to Nyakombe, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

776 There is a large number of diverse spirits, and almost
825 every village has several in its territory. Each one has its own
habitat in some singular place or object which stimulates the
imag[in]ation: enormous trees, oval hollows which form ponds of
a sort (*ɗ́mbo*, pl. *bafmbo*), steep slopes, extraordinary pieces of
limonite, whirlpools in streams and rivers, etc.

776 The Nkundó pray to the *bilímá* in order to obtain children.
● 942 For that purpose they make offerings of food and money. To test
someone's feelings toward it, an *elímá* may come to him in the
evening or at night in the guise of a known person and ask for some
small present. Unhappy is he who shows himself to be stingy: he
will be deprived of the object of his desire, or his child will be
premature or born sickly or deformed.

783 In addition to taking a generally friendly attitude toward
942 the spirit, another means of ensuring his intervention is open to a
776 woman. She can procure some kaolin (*ngóngo*) at the spirit's
habitat (a *ɗ́mbo*, preferably). In the evening she mixes it with
some plants. She smears her abdomen with this mixture, known
[1-49] as *inú*. She continues the treatment throughout her pregnancy;
it has the property of removing everything in her which is of such a
nature that it might oppose the spirit (*Ekíkolo lokoko jwɛ́ bilímo
ílɔ́ nɔ́ lɔ́kundó*).

Certain water spirits are known for their generosity, for
776 instance *Isímbílombé* or *Elɔ́ndolombé* of *Mpaká*, [471] who is
942 considered to be a female being. She goes on distant voyages to
seek a supply of children. On her return she appears to someone
and communicates the news to him so that he may spread it. But
she orders all women who desire her favors to observe some form
of abstinence. Sometimes she sings to amuse or calm the chil-
dren. On that day mothers must not use songs to pacify their little
ones or to put them to sleep and can use only soft words for that
purpose. Otherwise the child would die, for to do so would be to
disregard the old *elímá*'s kindness.

Sometimes the spirits give signs of their blessing. A woman
[787] who is bathing on the shore just at the time a cargo arrives there
will soon see her most intimate wish fulfilled. From forest spirits

women receive other signs: an unexpected obstacle in the form of a stone, a stump, a root, the capture of a tree frog which comes and jumps onto the shoulder, etc

A spirit loves and protects only a child he himself has given. He abhors and hates to the death the living gifts of his fellow spirits. If there are several bilimá in the vicinity of a single village, however, the Nkundó explain the absence of the usual rivalries by considering them as related; one is the husband, another the wife, others the children; that is why they do not oppose each other.

Thus an elimá is hostile to any fetus not of his creation. Nevertheless, his spiteful action only begins at the end of several weeks, and even then the pregnancy must have gone far enough to be visible (ámi jóela isómbá) Does it take time for him to obtain evidence that the fruit in question is undoubtedly his own gift?

In any case the consequence of this belief is that a woman who has been pregnant for several months cannot long [472] reside in foreign parts, and one who, after conception, has accompanied a husband who has gone to work elsewhere, returns to her village to complete the last period of pregnancy and to deliver.

However, there is an antidote (mengó) against this murderous action of the spirits. It may be obtained from a person who knows the recipe (this person is not the nkanga or "doctor"). The protective compound is wrapped in a bit of cloth and, by means of a thread of fibers from the lokóá creeper, is tied in the middle of a rope braided with the fibers of the ikuluyaéndó bush, which the threatened woman ties around her hips. (1)

1. These data on the subject of the elimá is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Father Schebesta (Vollblutneger und Halbzwerge, p. 241, and W. Schmidt, Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Vol. 4, p. 322), based on the word of his interpreter, Bern. Bongonga of Bodiama (Bombwanja) (now deceased), who was

600 the same rights as the other children of the polygynist.

595 The polygynist always sought to increase the number of his
556 wives, for his prestige rose and his fortune increased in that manner.
593 If anyone in civilized lands seeks to enlarge his fortune, this is done, people say, in order to insure the future of his children. The native thinks little about that; his primary idea is to enjoy himself and to surpass others in prestige and esteem. As far as the future of his children is concerned, there are polygynists who possess twenty or thirty wives or even more, and sometimes they have only one or two children. Also it is little in keeping with their notions to care for the future; he who is still alive tomorrow must take care of tomorrow then, so they reason. On the contrary, instead of caring
595 for his children, the polygynist often took great trouble to obtain a
593 wife for his son. The son, however, was not yet the owner of his
584 wife; it was, so to speak, only a loan. Not until after the death of
606 his father did he become owner. In some districts, when the father had obtained a wife for his son, he first kept this wife for some time for himself. Only after a few months did he give her to his son. In
595 other districts, when the wife was pregnant by the son, he was obliged
593 to send her for a few days to his father. He was not allowed to bear
606 the honor of fatherhood alone; his father must share that with him.
● 842 The father reserved for himself the honor of naming all of the chil-
551 dren of his children. In some areas of the Congo, morals were so
835 low and common that the father even kept his own daughters in his harem. This did not occur in Equatorial Africa, but there was a custom that was not much better. The magician was sometimes
583 consulted about the bride price which the father tried to get for his
791 daughter, or the brother for his sister.

The magician then gave them the advice that they themselves should first have relations with their own daughter or sister. This custom existed almost everywhere in Equatorial Africa.

583 [535] Bride Price. In general, the daughter was given in marriage upon payment of a bride price. The father had little choice of the future husband of his daughter. The one who guaranteed the most goods in payment was certain to get her. Since, in most cases, the little daughter had not yet arrived at the years of maturity, there was naturally no question of her consent. The bride price was not paid all at once, but gradually during the years while the daughter grew up. Since the daughter was given without her consent